

SCRIPTURE

THE QUARTERLY OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION

VOL. IV. No. 10

APRIL 1951

EDITORIAL

Annual General Meeting. The January number of *SCRIPTURE* went to press before we could give particulars of the Meeting held at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London, W.1, on 19th December 1950. We accordingly add a few details here.

In his report the Secretary described the progress made on the Bible Commentary and other proposed publications. Lectures at the Newman Centre were also reported on. He further announced that the Lending Library had at last found a home at the Newman Centre. The Treasurer gave a comprehensive survey of the financial state of the Association. The gist of this was that, in spite of all the work done gratuitously, our expenses exceeded receipts for the year by £8 5s. 9d. A draft of the proposed Rules of the Association was then read out and each rule was commented on individually. Several additions and emendations were suggested. (The revised draft is enclosed with this number.) After hearing further details of the work on the Bible Commentary, the Meeting desired that its thanks be conveyed to the members of the Editorial Committee for their part in the undertaking. A member put forward the suggestion that the Association would become more widely known if a panel of speakers were compiled and this fact made known, especially to members, who might be instrumental in arranging for such speakers to give talks in their own parishes to local meetings. Various suggestions were also made for new publications: a Scripture manual, different kinds of Scriptural pamphlets, Bible Reading leaflets. The continuance of the Bibliographical notices in the Quarterly was also recommended.

Lectures. Beginning in the autumn, a course of weekly lectures on the New Testament will be given at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London, W.1. Members of the C.B.A. are entitled to the same reduction in fee as Newman members. It is hoped that the number of C.B.A. members attending the lectures will be much larger than at the present course of Scripture lectures. A great deal of time, trouble and expense is involved in organizing these lectures and it is not encouraging to see the facilities scarcely used at all by our members. Further details of the lecture course will appear in the next number of *SCRIPTURE*.

The Society for Old Testament Study. For the second time within a very few years the Society has elected a Catholic, as its President. Father C. Lattey, S.J., was the first Catholic to hold this distinguished position (in 1947) and now the Very Reverend Monsignor John M. T. Barton, D.D., L.S.S., F.S.A., Consultor of the Pontifical Biblical Commission has been elected President for 1952. It is also an honour in particular for our own Association of which Mgr Barton is Chairman. We offer him our hearty congratulations.

Archæological Excavation. Numerous interesting sites are yielding up their secrets to the spade of the archæologist. At Corinth, the American School of Classical Studies has brought to light many illuminating details of the ancient city destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C., which would seem to confirm its reputation for licentiousness. The part mainly excavated is an open colonnade, 500 ft long and 80 ft wide at the southern end of the market place; behind the colonnade were rows of taverns and other buildings. In Palestine, the French are excavating at Abu Gosch, the reputed site of Qiryath-Yearim, the place where the Ark of the Covenant rested for twenty years. Even more interesting than this is the excavation by the American School of Oriental Research at the site of the New Testament Jericho. We quote from the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*: 'Herod's city which was built along the banks of the Wadi El Qelt, was truly magnificent. Along the river bank was a sunken garden with a great façade two blocks long in which there were fifty statuary niches three feet wide and eight feet high. At its centre the façade was broken by a large circular theatre, which also served as a terraced garden. Flower pots were found still in place. A grand stairway leading up from the river bank to the façade gave entrance to a large Government building. On the opposite side of the Wadi there are remains of two government buildings. The entire area is surrounded by ruins of lesser edifices and villas. The northern part of the city is guarded by another great fortress. The excavated city seems to have been built about the time of Christ's Nativity and flourished for three centuries, when it began to decline. Eventually it practically disappeared, until about the eighth century, when it was used by the Arabs as a military outpost. The architecture of Herod's city was modelled on that of the wealthy areas of Rome. The buildings are of concrete, faced with diamond-shaped stones and painted plaster. The colours are still as bright as when they were first applied. Further details concerning this excavation will be awaited with intense interest.'

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN¹

THE Holy Father has not been hasty in satisfying the desire of the Catholic world that he should define the Assumption. For over two hundred years petitions have been pouring in to Rome. It is said that between 1849 and 1940 there were over 2,500 from Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops. Some theologians thought there was already sufficient agreement to create a moral unanimity, and that the Assumption could, without further definition, be regarded as a doctrine of the Church. For Catholics have always believed that the Holy Spirit guides the Church, and that the whole Church would not agree in error. Petitions came in with notable frequency during the Holy Year of 1925, as formerly at the time of the Vatican Council. Moreover, it seemed that, once the Immaculate Conception was defined, there remained no theological doubt about the Assumption.

The present Pope, however, like his predecessors was cautious, and at one time it looked as though he would not accede to these demands. Eventually in May 1946, he asked all the Bishops of the World what devotion to the Assumption existed among the clergy and faithful in their various dioceses, and particularly whether they thought that the bodily Assumption could be defined as a dogma of the faith. He finally asked whether they and their people wanted it. The answer to this questionnaire was almost unanimous in favour both of the definition and its opportuneness. Yet still the Holy Father hesitated. He consulted the Church's doctors, he appointed theologians to study Scripture and Tradition, he asked for prayers. Only after several more years of prayer did Pius XII eventually declare to the world his decision to define this doctrine so long accepted in Catholic tradition without hesitation.

It was a supreme gesture to the world that the Church's first concern is with the future life. When most of the world is concerned with this life, divided into the supporters of communistic materialism and their opponents anxious to save worldly prosperity, the Church, which is so often accused by her enemies of being political, makes the central event of her holy year the proclamation of the supreme spiritual privilege given to one who while still more than a girl bore in her sinless womb the Maker of the world.

Protestants are our allies against materialism, naturalism and rationalism, but often they have been brought up in an atmosphere out of sympathy with the ancient Catholic tradition. They often appear to Catholics to have lost, not all faith, but what Newman called the principle of faith, according to which it is regarded as a privilege to

¹ This article may be obtained in pamphlet form, price 3d., from St Michael's, Moor Street, Birmingham, published by the Legion of Mary.

believe and a loss not to believe whatever God has thought fit to reveal to mankind. Sometimes the idea of a Church guided by the Spirit is either repugnant or forgotten. In such extreme cases, Protestants appear to the Catholic to look upon Christianity as a series of truths, the acceptance of which forms the price they pay for the privileges of Christianity, rather than as a great supernatural world of truth, which stands or falls as a whole.

Fortunately this is not true of all Protestants and, especially in England, many non-Catholics call themselves Catholics and have for many years been feeding on Catholic truth, re-discovering sometimes truths which had been lost sight of in the years since they became divided from us. But we feel they still have a long way to go in honouring the Mother who had the incredible privilege of bringing the Son of God into the world and looking after him, and standing by him at the cross. In so far as they neglect her, they cut themselves off at once from all the Christian centuries before the Reformation, as well as from the whole Catholic Church of to-day, they even cut themselves off from the separated Eastern Christians. Catholics have always feared that such neglect of the Mother makes it psychologically easier to neglect the Son, or at least to hold abstract and unreal ideas of the Incarnation and Redemption.

So-called Bible Protestants adopted, as a basis of their minimizing attitude, a position not based on the Scriptures or on Catholic Tradition, that they need not—or must not—accept any doctrine which they cannot discover by their private judgement in the Scriptures. Unfortunately there have been cases where this attitude has not kept them true even to all that is in Scripture. But their position always had the negative advantage, from their point of view, of making it possible for them to exclude with greater assurance anything not to their mind, provided it is not obviously in the Scripture text.

This is clearly not the position of all, as indeed it is not the official position of the Church of England. To such we can therefore appeal with some degree of confidence to follow our argument with sympathy.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CONSENT OF THE FAITHFUL

Though the Holy Father prudently hesitated even after receiving the replies of the bishops which made the doctrine so certainly the teaching of the Church, he admitted in the beginning of his encyclical of 1st November 1950, that it was this unanimity of bishops and faithful which removed the least possibility of doubt. He speaks of the 'singular agreement of Catholic bishops and faithful', which 'shows by itself with a certainty immune from error that this privilege (the Assumption) is a truth revealed by God and contained in the divine deposits that Christ

delivered to His spouse to be faithfully kept'. He tells us that the truth of Mary's assumption into the glory of heaven could not be known by any natural powers, but only by the revelation of God.

SINLESSNESS IMPLIES CORRUPTION

But he sees the reason for this general agreement about the doctrine in the connexion between sinlessness and freedom from the corruption which follows upon death.

St Paul in his Letter to the Philippians tells us that God's plan of redemption for us is eventually 'to form this humbled body of ours anew, moulding it into the image of his glorified body, so effective is his power to make all things obey him' (Phil. iii, 21). If we had never sinned, this body of ours would not have been 'humbled', and would not have needed such radical new forming. It would have been as glorious and comely as our soul would have been sinless. The reason why we find it so much harder to think of glorified bodies than of glorified souls is that we are so much more impressed by bodily suffering and weakness than we are by the sinfulness of our souls.

God's original design for us was immortality and freedom from suffering, a sinless soul in an immortal body. Thus we read in the Book of Wisdom: 'God, to be sure, framed man for an immortal destiny, the created image of His own endless being; but, since the devil's envy brought death into the world, they make him their model that take him for their master' (ii, 24-5, Knox). Sin and death are put down to the woman in Ecclesiasticus, xxv, 33. 'From the woman came the beginning of sin and through her we all die.' They are put down to Adam in St Paul, Romans v, 12 '... by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death...' In other places sin and death are inseparably connected (Romans vi, 23) (James i, 15). And it was not until after the first sin that God put His threat into execution: 'Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return' (Genesis ii, 17). Full Redemption will be not merely the saving of man's soul. God's designs will not be fully carried out until the body in which we have suffered and wanted, which has been exposed to hunger and blows, which laboured for God and man, is freed together with the soul and led to an everlasting youth of strength and beauty. Only such a redemption is a true human redemption. For man is body and soul; man is a spirit spiritualizing some of this world's matter.

When the Light that enlightened every man that cometh into this world came to redeem his creatures the darkness could not comprehend it—a darkness it was of man's making—a cloud of sin so dense that God's light could not penetrate it. From that sin came all division, all disunity, all strife. Strife between God and man, strife between man and man, strife between body and soul, strife between mind and passions.

SECOND CENTURY FATHERS TEACH THIS DOCTRINE

Nothing is more certainly and universally witnessed by the early Fathers than this widely attested Scripture doctrine that all suffering, death, strife and division of every kind came not from God but from man's sin. The Fathers recognized that man was naturally mortal, but they all insisted that God had intended him because of his likeness to God to have the further gift of immortality and incorruption. St Irenaeus is so convinced that this was God's intention that he says that if man were to lose his life and never receive it back through the merits of Christ, God would have been overcome by the devil. 'For if the man who had been made by God that he might live, should lose his life, hurt by the Serpent who had corrupted him, and no more return to life, but be quite abandoned unto death; God would have been overcome, and the wickedness of the Serpent would have prevailed against His will' (Adv. Haer, 3-23-1). Many of those St Irenaeus was opposing thought that flesh as such was evil and must corrupt, forgetting that the worst of them was not their mortal and weak flesh, but their sinful and impure soul, forgetting that it is only impurity of soul which brought corruption of body. 'For as the flesh is susceptible of corruption, so is also of incorruption, and as of death, so also of life . . . For if Death made man a corpse, why shall not Life come and quicken the man? . . . For if the flesh could not be saved, by no means had the Word of God been made flesh' (5-12-1). 'For the glory of God is a living Man . . .' (4-20-7). To those agnostics who considered flesh as something dishonourable St Irenaeus said: They 'dishonour the Incarnation which takes place by the pure generation of the Word of God, and defraud man of his ascent unto God, and are unthankful to the Word of God, Who for them was made flesh. For to this end, the Word of God was made man, and He Who is the Son of God, Son of Man, that man blended with God's Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the Son of God. Since we could not otherwise receive incorruption and immortality, but by being united to Incorruption and Immortality, and how could we be united to incorruption and immortality, without Incorruption and Immortality being first made that which we are?'

This is expressed a little more clearly perhaps in another second-century writer, St Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch: 'But someone will say: "Is not death part of man's nature?" Not at all. "Was man then immortal?" We do not say that either. It will be answered: "Was he then nothing at all?" We do not hold this either. This is what we hold; by nature man was neither mortal nor immortal. If he had been created from the beginning immortal, he would have been created God. On the other hand, if he had been created mortal, God would have seemed to be the cause of his death. He was not then either mortal or immortal when created, but (according to what we have said above), capable of

either. So, if following God's commandment, he turned in the direction of immortality, he would have received immortality as a reward and become divine (theos). If on the other hand he should turn towards the works of death by disobeying God, he would become the cause of his own death. As a matter of fact, God made man free and master of himself.'

FOURTH CENTURY FATHERS

The same truth that all death and corruption came into the world through sin is expressed in the fourth century by St Athanasius. 'The presence and love of the Word had called them into being ; inevitably, therefore, when they lost the knowledge of God, they lost existence with it ; for it is God alone who exists, evil is non-being, the negation and antithesis of good. By nature, of course, man is mortal, since he was made from nothing ; but he bears also the Likeness of Him Who is, and if he preserves that Likeness through constant contemplation, then his nature is deprived of its power and he remains incorrupt.

'This, then, was the plight of men. God had not only made them out of nothing, but had also graciously bestowed on them His own life by the grace of the Word. They turning from eternal things to things corruptible, by counsel of the devil, had become the cause of their own corruption in death ; for, as I said before, though they were by nature subject to corruption, the grace of their union with the Word made them capable of escaping from the natural law, provided that they retained the beauty of innocence with which they were created. That is to say, the presence of the Word with them shielded them even from natural corruption, as also Wisdom says : "God created man for incorruption and as an image of his own eternity ; but by envy of the devil death entered into the world". When this happened, men began to die, and corruption ran riot among them and held sway over them to an even more than natural degree, because it was the penalty of which God had forewarned them for transgressing the commandment. Indeed, they had in their sinning surpassed all limits ; for, having invented wickedness in the beginning and so involved themselves in death and corruption, they had gone on gradually from bad to worse, not stopping at any one kind of evil, but continually, as with insatiable appetite, devising new kinds of sins . . . It would, of course, have been unthinkable that God should go back upon his word and that man, having transgressed, should not die ; but it was equally monstrous that beings which once had shared the nature of the Word should perish and turn back again into non-existence through corruption' (*De Incarnatione Verbi*, chap i, 4-5, C. S. Lewis's translation, London 1944).

St Basil, Sermon: God is not author of evil. 'God created the body, not sickness ; and God created the soul, not sin. But the soul was degraded, when untrue to its nature. Wherein consisted its chief

good? In union with God and union through love. When it had lost this, it was spoilt with all manner of sickness . . . God then did not create death, but we have ourselves put it on through our ruined nature.'

St Augustine, *City of God*, xiv, 26. 'In Paradise, then, man lived as he desired so long as he desired what God had commanded. He lived in the enjoyment of God, and was good by God's goodness; he lived without any want, and had it in his power so to live eternally . . . There was in his body not corruption, nor seed of corruption, which could produce in him any unpleasant sensation' (Dods' translation, *Edinburgh 1872*).

WE MIGHT HAVE ALL BEEN INCORRUPT

From all this you can see that it follows from the teaching of Scripture and universal tradition that the picture of Mary as the sinless one living with her body and soul in the glory of God is a picture of what God originally intended for all mankind. She was as Irenaeus tells us, a new beginning. 'Mary . . . a virgin, being obedient became both to herself and to all mankind the cause of salvation.' It is a strange fact that even the Koran regards Mary as free from original sin and sinless, and to this day she receives more honour among Muslims than all other women. Though God did not intend that we should have the supreme glory of being mother of God, nor even the lesser glory of the first creation of God and mother of all the living (as Eve was), yet we were originally intended by God to share her sinlessness, and so much beauty and holiness of soul that, if we were now to be able to see it, it would seem impossible for anyone to attain it. We were originally intended to share God's own bliss and glory. As we read in the words of Scripture 'God . . . framed man for an immortal destiny, the created image of His own endless being'.

This is why for Mary and her Son, there could be no suffering, death or corruption in the grave, if we had not sinned and the Son had not to share our suffering nature to redeem us. He did not have to share our corruption in the grave to save us. On the contrary, we are saved, according to St Paul, by his resurrection. We know how the Fathers of the earliest centuries gave us a picture of Mary, as free from sin as her son. Ephraim, *Carmina Nisibena*: 'Indeed you Lord and your Mother are the only ones, who are beautiful in every respect; for there is not in you, Lord, any stain, nor any disfigurement in your mother'. And again: 'But, virgin Lady, immaculate mother of God, my most glorious Lady, showerer of blessings upon me, more exalted than the stars, much more pure than the rays of the sun'. And again 'There are two innocent ones, two without guile, Mary and Eve, who were made absolutely equal (by God), and afterwards one was made the cause of death, the other the cause of our life'.

Pius XII, speaking of the Assumption in his Encyclical of 1st November says: 'This privilege shone forth with a new light when our predecessor solemnly defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. For the two privileges are most closely connected with each other. For Christ overcame sin and death by his own death; and he who is born from above in baptism conquers sin and death through the same Christ. But God did not wish to confer on the just full victory over death, by a general law, until the end of time. So the bodies of the just disintegrate after death, and not until the last day will they be joined to each other's glorious soul.

'But God wished the Blessed Virgin Mary to be exempt from this general law. For she, by a quite unique privilege, conquered sin in her immaculate conception, and so was not subject to that law of remaining in the grave, nor did she need to wait to the end of time for the redemption of the body.

'Hence, once it was solemnly defined that the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, was from the beginning free from hereditary stain, the souls of Christians were aroused to a more intense hope that the dogma of her bodily Assumption into heaven should be defined as soon as possible by the supreme authority of the Church.'

MARY SHARED ADAM'S PRIVILEGE

In other words, since the Church believed that Mary was sinless from the first moment of her creation, and that Mary was at least as highly privileged in this respect as Adam, and since the Scripture and the Church had ever taught that death and corruption only came from sin, the doctrine of Mary's utter sinlessness involved her freedom from the need to suffer, die and disintegrate in the grave. She nevertheless did suffer and die because it was God's will that her Son should redeem the race and that she should be associated with Him.

The Light which enlightens every man that comes into this world, which would fail to dispel all supervening darkness, shone upon Mary and drove away the cloud of sin from the first moment of her existence, and Mary was always what we all might have been, but for the darkness which at first received neither Him nor her, and put Him to death. It is strange that the darkness should be so attached to its darkness that it should resent Christ and His Mother being all light. Accept that, and you cannot deny her Assumption, except by denying the universal scriptural and traditional doctrine that death and corruption come only through sin. Some of the Fathers—as St Epiphanius in the fourth century—doubted whether our Lady really died, so much were they conscious that death was not God's original plan.

WHY NO BODY OR RELICS PRESERVED ?

That popular opinion thought on the same lines as St Epiphanius is suggested by the strange fact that there exists no early tradition of Mary's body being preserved anywhere, that no one ever claimed to have any relics of that body, and that no one ever invented either body or relics. We know from the accounts of many pilgrims visiting the Holy Land before the fifth century that nothing was known of any tomb before that time. Needless to say, nothing is recorded of any tomb elsewhere at that time. When the guides do begin to point out a tomb near Jerusalem in the fifth century, it is one that everyone can see to be empty. They invented a tomb, but did not dare to invent a body ! Perhaps it is not so surprising when we know what they thought of Mary and how impossible they found it to associate a normal death and corruption with her. Is this perhaps why they do not invent a story as to where the body was taken ? Most early pilgrims are told that it is not known what happened to the body. Though apocryphal stories of the Assumption existed already at this time, in Palestine at least, these stories were not told to pilgrims by the guides.

We can only conclude that for reasons we can easily guess, the Christians who venerated the tombs of SS. Peter and Paul and other Apostles, failed to venerate the tomb or body of her whom they considered the holiest of mankind.

Most theologians hold that Mary died before being assumed. The Pope has made no definite statement on this. The basis of the common opinion is simply that in Scripture, e.g. in Genesis iii, 15 ; in Isaiah vii, 14, in the infancy-gospels of Luke and Matthew, Mary is always found united with her Son ; and Catholics usually find it impossible to credit that she was different from Him in any matter so important as either death or resurrection.

But, though also always joined to her Son, Mary is also one of us. In this sense she is the beginning of the new era with Christ ; the first-fruits of the redemption, of the New Testament ; the pattern of what all members of the Church are called to be in their final perfection. The Immaculate Conception and Assumption are rather privileges enabling her to unite us with her Son than privileges separating her from us.

OTHER ARGUMENTS

Earlier writers looked to other arguments. Some of these may still be preferred by individual theologians. I will merely give a sample. Some argued, for instance, from the position and office of Mary with regard to her Son ; if it were possible for her to be spared the corruption of the grave, could so loving a Son have refused her this prerogative ? We have seen that it is more than possible ; it alone befits God's plan. To quote

Newman, 'Who can conceive, my brethren, that God should so repay the debt, which he condescended to owe to His Mother, for the elements of His human body, as to allow the flesh and blood from which it was taken to moulder in the grave? Do the sons of men thus deal with their Mothers? Do they not nourish and sustain them in their feebleness and keep them in life while they are able?' Or to quote a writer of the eighth century, who did more than any others perhaps to convince later Christendom of the doctrinal necessity of this teaching, 'Does it not follow from our Lord's graciousness that he should save his Mother's honour, for he came to fulfil the law, not to destroy it? And the law commands us to honour our mothers and condemns dishonour . . . For to rot and be the food of worms is the ignominy of our human state. Jesus is free from ignominy and therefore that nature of Mary, which Jesus is shown to have taken from her . . . I am unable to think that that most sacred body, from which Christ took flesh, in which he united the divine nature to the human . . . was delivered up to worms for food' (Pseudo-Augustinus, *De Assumptione Virginis*, v and vi).

Many other arguments have been put forward since the seventh century, when theological reasoning on the subject really begins, perhaps first in a work attributed to Modestus of Jerusalem. These arguments have been the fruit of 'the inquirer into heavenly truths' dwelling 'in the cell and the oratory, pouring forth his heart in prayer, collecting his thoughts in meditation, dwelling on the idea of Jesus, or of Mary, or of grace, or of eternity, and pondering the words of holy men who have gone before him' (Newman, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 343). Modestus was conscious of being a pioneer; he expresses surprise that preachers before his time had not spoken about the Assumption. The people come eager to hear about the last days of the Mother of God, and he feels compelled to do something in answer to their pious desire. He does not pretend, however, to know details of her death, putting forward what he does with due qualifications, as known only to God or the Saviour. His conviction comes, as is clear, not from stories he has heard, but because he cannot associate corruption with Mary. He says that Christ God 'clothed her with the incorruptibility of his own body, and glorified her with incomparable glory'. Again, he calls her a human tabernacle, 'raised and established by Him (Christ) on the foundation of the incorruptibility of his own body, to be with him for ever and ever and serve us Christians with her powerful protection, assuring our salvation by her help'.

SOME AGNOSTICISM IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

In the following two centuries, the eighth and ninth, doubts began to arise in the West about whether the bodily Assumption was necessarily implied in the feast. This was not because of any rival tradition, but

because the old apocryphal story, with all its appearance of legend, had recently been translated into Latin and found its way into the West. The fact that it had been rejected by the Church as untrustworthy gave encouragement to the agnostics. Was it not safer to reject the original truth around which the legend was woven? It was rather like the position of someone who rejected the existence of Gautama Buddha because so many legends about him arose later. The leader of the agnostics was Paschasius Radbert, who forged a letter and imposed it on to the name of St Jerome, and came to be known as the Pseudo-Jerome. The Church showed her broadmindedness by including the Pseudo-Jerome, with all his scepticism, in the first six lessons of the Office of the Assumption for about six centuries. But she showed her guidance by the Spirit in eventually rejecting the view there expressed and accepting that of Radbert's rival, an unknown writer now known as the Pseudo-Augustine,¹ who defended the assumption so vigorously as to convince Christendom.

HISTORY

Non-Catholics often ask us for historical evidence. If they mean by this eye-witness accounts by human beings, we neither have such nor have ever looked for them. We have no such accounts of the virgin birth, nor of our Lord's temptations, nor of most of the agony in the garden, nor have we witnesses which would satisfy historians for many of the events of our Lord's life. Obviously we have none for the Immaculate Conception. And, if we did have eye-witnesses, that would not make it part of the Christian faith. It is not a question of profane history, but of doctrine—though we know by revelation that it did take place.

TRADITION

Perhaps non-Catholics are asking for what we call Tradition, evidence that early Christians held it. We certainly have traditional witness for nearly all I have said so far as far back as the second century, i.e. that Mary was a second Eve, a new beginning, a Mother of Life, characterized by virtue and faith instead of faithlessness and disobedience; as also the doctrine that death and corruption are against God's original design, and only came as a result of sin. Death of the innocent can help to overcome sin; corruption in the grave cannot. The only tradition we can be certain of as *explicitly* passed on to the first generation is the tradition that Mary was different. Just as Martha knew that Christ would rise, the first generations might have known that His mother would.

There is of course a great deal of unofficial evidence that Christians thought our Lady's end miraculously unusual even to the extent of

¹ Perhaps Ratramnus. Another writer, on the other side, perhaps Autpertus, became confused with St Augustine, and is sometimes referred to as Pseudo-Augustine.

bodily Assumption. This is reflected in the apocryphal writings.¹ These legends—for legends they undoubtedly are—arose in orthodox Christian circles, and were invented obviously because Christians felt that Mary's privileges demanded it. They did not agree however: some said she was martyred; others that she died a normal death. Some said that after death her body remained incorrupt; others that it rose again and was united to her soul.

FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES

In the fourth century St Epiphanius thinks it possible—even probable—that our Lady did not die. He suggests that Scripture is silent for fear of startling us by this extraordinary miracle. St Ambrose in the same century pictures her standing at the foot of the cross desiring to die with her son, and rejoicing because she knew she would share his resurrection. She here is shown as having faith in two events which had not yet occurred; her Son's resurrection and her own. 'Did she not rather desire to die at the same time as her Son? In this case, she leaped for joy, at the thought of rising up with him, being well instructed in the mystery, knowing that she was Mother of him who was to rise again. Knowing also that the death of her Son was a sacrifice for the common good, she was ready to associate herself by her death, and if necessary, add something to the work of the world's salvation' (*De inst. Virg.* vii, 49).

Timothy of Jerusalem, in a work many think to have been written in the fifth century, says the Virgin 'blameless and in all things holy, remains immortal even till now through Him who had His habitation in her, who carrying her into the place of the assumption, took her across'. This seems to imply a view that she did not die at all.

St Ambrose and others say that Christ alone rose from the dead. Does this contradict our interpretation of his passage? When we find elsewhere that he speaks of many people rising from the dead at the time of Christ's death, we realize that, in saying Christ alone rose from the dead, he must mean that Christ was the only one to rise from the dead by his own power.

It was not till the fifth century, with the establishment against all heresies of Catholic doctrine regarding Christ that theologians began to work out the theology involved in Mary's position. Obviously it would have been meaningless to discuss the full significance and implications

¹ A question has been sent to SCRIPTURE as to the value of the apocryphal sources for the doctrine of the Assumption. They have no direct value. The Latin version was condemned in the Gelasian Decree, about the eighth century. Everyone admits that they are pure legends. They do not even agree in saying that our Lady was assumed. The fact that they all make our Lady's life end in miracle, and that some record her bodily assumption either to paradise or to heaven has an indirect value, as suggesting that many Christians of the time must have realized that the Assumption followed from her dignity and position.

of divine motherhood, until the Godhead of her Son was sufficiently understood. So it is really only from the fifth century onwards that any systematic doctrine of our Lady, over and above what had been done in the second century, began.

THE FEAST AND LATER GREEK FATHERS

The feast of the Assumption seems to go back to that time, though it was not officially established in the empire until the end of the sixth century. The earlier date is strongly suggested by the fact that the Ethiopians, Nestorians and Armenians who broke away from the Church about that time still keep the feast on the same date as we do. They never called it the feast of our Lady's death, but always by a special name, such as her *Falling Asleep*, her *Passing Over*, or her *Assumption*. Many think it was first celebrated at Ephesus on the occasion of the declaration that she was Mother of God, and it is probable that the first church of the Falling Asleep was in Jerusalem, a church to which the Emperor gave great gifts about this time. Pius XII in his encyclical for the definition refers to the evidence from the early liturgical books. The Gregorian Sacramentary (sixth-seventh century) says that, though Mary died a temporal death, she could not be held by the bonds of death. The Gallican Sacramentary (at least before the eighth century) calls the Assumption a singular privilege. The Byzantine Liturgy says explicitly that she preserved her body incorrupt in the grave, and glorified it when taken up to God.

St Gregory of Tours mentions the bodily assumption in the sixth century, though he gives no theological arguments for it. SS. Andrew of Crete, Germanus and John Damascene all preach on the feast, giving many theological reasons for their belief in the full bodily assumption. St John Damascene is usually regarded as the Father who summed up in his writings the whole of Greek theology; and few Fathers are held in greater respect. Three sermons of his on the bodily assumption have come down to us. In his second homily he writes: 'Just as the all-holy and incorruptible body that was born of her and hypostatically united to the Word rose from the tomb on the third day, so it was necessary that the Virgin should be snatched from the tomb that the Mother be reunited to her Son. Just as He had come down to her, so this beloved Mother was lifted up to a greater and more beautiful home, heaven itself. It was necessary that the Son who had been her guest in her womb, should be her host in His own tabernacles . . . It was necessary that she who had preserved her virginity intact in her childbearing should see her body protected from all corruption, even after death . . . It was necessary that she who had seen her Son on the cross and received into the depths of her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped when she became a mother should contemplate this Son sitting at the right hand of the Father.

It was necessary that the Mother of God should enter into the possession of all her Son's property and be venerated by all creation as the Mother and Handmaid of God.¹

In other parts of this booklet I have quoted from writers of the immediately succeeding centuries. After the ninth century, explicit defence of the Assumption becomes universal.

SCRIPTURE

What about Scripture? Clearly, Scripture is very much involved in the doctrinal arguments we began with. Some theologians think to find the dogma explicitly, though in a veiled manner, in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse (Revelation), where there is a woman enthroned in heaven who brought forth a man-child whom the dragon is determined to destroy. Newman was always impressed by the fact that in the first book of the Bible and in the last, we find a woman, the devil and a child. The woman and child are in both cases in opposition to the devil. In both cases the child is victorious.

St John is the only writer of the New Testament who, according to tradition is likely to have lived long enough to record any details about Mary's death. It is only in the Apocalypse that he would be likely to do so. We find in this revelation three women; two of them are good and are in opposition to the devil, and at peace with Christ; the remaining one is the scarlet woman who is in league with the forces of evil and in opposition to Christ. The scarlet woman is in deadly opposition to the Church, to all that is good, and therefore to Mary, who is sinless. For the scarlet woman is accused of all manner of vice, she rides on a scarlet beast (representing luxury), scrawled all over with blasphemy, and she is drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore witness to Jesus. The beast is dead at the time John writes, and is to be followed by ten kings. In this chapter, St John represents the persecuting Roman empire, which was so full of luxury and vice, which was drunk with the blood of Christians. The ten kings which follow represent other kings who would follow the Roman empire in persecuting the Lamb and His faithful. They will destroy the scarlet woman, but will hand over their dominion to the beast and still be enemies of the Lamb.

How different is the woman of chapter xii, who is pictured first as seen in the sky in glory about to bring forth her man-child. The dragon (the devil) is also pictured as waiting to devour the man-child. The man-child, shown as the good shepherd, and in the messianic terms of Psalm ii, 9, is clearly Christ. He is taken up by God out of the clutches of the dragon. St John then pictures the previous struggle between the devil and the forces of good, which had led to the devil's being cast out of heaven, and to his malice against Christ's followers on earth. In verse 13, he is shown as going in pursuit of the woman, now that the man-child

has been taken up away from him (by his resurrection and ascension). The woman is taken away into a place of refuge on the wings of the great eagle, which represents God, Yahweh (Cf. Dt. xxxii, 11). This seems to mean the assumption of the Blessed Virgin. Finally, the devil is pictured as going in pursuit of Mary's children, in the final verses. The Woman of this chapter has often been taken for the Church, but it fits better the Virgin Mother of sorrows, who suffered with Christ to bring Him forth in the hearts of us all and who, after she has been taken away, still leaves us, her children, to struggle against the evil one.

This prophecy, like the rest of these chapters, refers principally to the future but, in explaining the future, it refers back to certain events (Christ's birth, ascension, Mary's assumption) which bear upon the future.

So much for what I personally regard as probably an explicit reference to Mary's assumption.

People have objected that Christ says in Jo. iii, 13: 'No man has ever gone up to heaven; but there is one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man, who dwells in heaven'. This does not bear on the question, for here Christ is not denying the resurrection of the body, but is asserting that he alone was able to reveal the Father, since he alone was in the Father's bosom. Jo. xiii, 36, has been quoted, 'I am going where thou canst not follow me', but our Lord adds the words: 'But thou shalt follow me afterwards'.

OPPORTUNENESS

Many people ask: Why was this doctrine defined precisely at this time? Surely any time is opportune if the doctrine is part of revelation. Perhaps the questioner means: Why was it not defined sooner? I suppose the answer to that is that it was not seen with complete conviction until the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception had been defined. After that had been done, it was only a matter of time; and the necessary study and preparation could hardly have been completed in much less than a century.

Pius XII gives the following reasons for responding to the appeal of the Catholic world to-day. First it will increase the glory of the Trinity, with whom Mary is so closely associated. Secondly, one may hope that it will inspire all who call themselves Christians to increase in their love of Mary and their desire to join the Mystical Body of Christ, of which she is the Mother. Lastly, one may hope that men will gain an increased realization of the value of human life, when dedicated to the Father's will and the good of mankind.

I will end with words of a seventh century writer: 'As she is a woman, so she is queen and Lady and Mother of God . . . She rose again, not indeed in a purely spiritual manner as it were without flesh and body, but clothed about in her most holy body with incorruption and immortality . . .' (Pseudo-Athanasius).

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THE CERF EDITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

THE translators of old have shown themselves mainly anxious to be strictly faithful to the original texts or the Vulgate; though the Authorized Version in particular was a classic which will always hold a very honourable place in our literature. But the desire has steadily grown in many countries for a blend of perfect scholarship with a perfect literary style, and of this craving the *Cerf* edition in French furnishes a fruit. Its official title is the Jerusalem Bible, as being brought out under the competent charge of the Dominican Fathers of the *École Biblique* at Jerusalem. It is an interesting fact that the English effort in the same direction is also centred upon 'Jerusalem', as it is called, the Jerusalem chamber at Westminster Abbey, whence also was issued the Revised Version, a considerable improvement upon which may be looked for both from the scholarly and the literary point of view, no less than in the French effort.

The attempt to give the text a pleasing appearance is not entirely successful, at all events in the prose books. Having threshed the matter out carefully at the time when we were beginning the Westminster Version, I still think that it is better not to put the numeration of the verses into the text itself; usually numbers in the margin sufficiently distinguish the verses, though possibly some sign might be given where they do not, as for example in the Nestlé New Testament. Still less is it necessary to insert small letters to give the reference to footnotes, which can bear the numbers of the verses in question. And the insets which indicate the subjects of paragraphs seem too black compared with the text. On the other hand, as one that has known and loved French from infancy, I venture to remark that the translations make a good impression. In the part containing the Psalms there is a valuable note on the translation, which lays stress on the order of the words, and especially on inversion, the good effect of which is seen in the very first verse of the Psalter :

ni dans la voie des pécheurs ne se tient,
ni au conseil des moqueurs ne s'assied.

Coming to the parts now under review, it may be well to begin where it seems necessary to stress definite disagreement. M. l'Abbé Cazelles, P.S.S., in his edition of Deuteronomy (144 pages: 7.6 x 5.6 inches, as always: 260 francs), does not appear to attribute to Moses any part at all in the actual composition of the book; it grew by degrees, until at the Babylonian exile God inspired a second edition of the work, in which cc. 1-4 and some lesser additions were made. Stress is laid upon the preponderating part played by Moses in the work; the religion and the spirit are his, and so forth. But a considerable qualification is

inserted in these remarks : 'le fond est mosaïque, ne serait-ce que par le Decalogue' (p. 15). This is not the place to draw out the arguments for the substantially Mosaic authorship ; and it may be allowed that there were some later additions of various kinds, historical, legal and so forth. But the editor does not offer any real justification for his extreme position with regard to the authorship, which of course must affect considerably any estimate of the nature and value of the book. A map is supplied in this instalment, and in others as required.

The Psalms are treated in a rather large volume (484 pages : 820 francs) by Père R. Tournay, O.P., Professor at the École Biblique, with the collaboration of M. Raymond Schwab. There recently appeared a new edition of the large commentary in the Pirot Bible, but there is plenty of room for more. Here too the introduction is long and full, running in all to 61 pages. In the late Instruction of the Biblical Commission upon the teaching of Scripture, especial emphasis is laid upon the beginnings of the human race, the messianic prophecies and the psalms ; and it is also to be noticed that students in seminaries and religious houses are to be encouraged to read the Scriptures daily, either in the Vulgate or in some more recent translation from the original texts. It is significant that there is no suggestion of using a translation from the Latin Vulgate. Such a book as this would be an ideal one to put into the hands of the students. The Pirot edition, I take it, is designed rather for teachers and more advanced students.

The Book of Joshua (92 pages : 160 francs) is contributed by Père Abel, O.P., the veteran professor at the École Biblique, whom I had the privilege of meeting when he was on an archæological expedition in Palestine. The only complaint that might be made is that he does not help us more ; the introduction is short, and notes are few. He does not consider Joshua to be the author, but rather the hero of the book (p. 7) ; the story may go back to about the end of the second millennium (p. 8). One is left in some little doubt as to its historical value (p. 12).

The Book of Wisdom (120 pages : 210 francs) has been contributed by Canon Osty, P.S.S., of the Paris Institut Catholique. It is generally agreed that it is only by a transparent literary fiction that Solomon is represented as the author ; it is written in fairly good Greek, supported by a wide vocabulary, and some knowledge of the philosophy and science of his time. The author is a Jew of Alexandria, and wrote in the first half of the first century B.C. The present writer would prefer to put the date somewhat earlier, but it would require a minute discussion to justify this view. Great emphasis is placed on the existence of God, the source and main object of all true wisdom ; Canon Osty analyses carefully the dogmatic content of the book, as well as its debt to Hellenistic thought and its influence on the New Testament. Perhaps its influence on St Paul needed rather more emphasis. Altogether the work is a

valuable contribution on a book that has perhaps received more attention in England than elsewhere.

The Book of Job, prepared by Père Larcher, O.P. (176 pages : 320 francs) is easy to analyse, and doubts will always be raised about the prologue and the intervention of Elihu, which he definitely regards as a later insertion, without questioning its inspiration and canonicity. The author Père Larcher regards as a poetical genius, a profound thinker, a religious soul, sensible also to human misery, and certainly a Jew, probably of Palestine. The book is a *chef-d'oeuvre incomparable*, probably of the first half of the fifth century B.C.

To come now to the New Testament, St Matthew's gospel has been undertaken by Père Benoît, O.P., of the École Biblique (173 pages : 310 francs). His introduction opens very rightly with a strong emphasis on the five discourses which give the gospel its distinctive character, and upon the need of taking into consideration the early tradition that St Matthew wrote his gospel in Aramaic (p. 13). St Jerome tells us that the 'Gospel according to the Hebrews' was written in Aramaic, the native language of the Palestine Jews in our Lord's time, picked up after the Babylonian exile from their neighbours in Syria and Damascus. He twice calls it the *ipsum Hebraicum*, the Hebrew text itself, of St Matthew's gospel (*De vir. ill.* 3; *In Matt. ii.* 5), and mentions that he translated it into Greek and Latin (*De vir. ill.* 2); but the translations are lost. It is true that his quotations are at times very different from anything in the present Matthew text, but it seems likely enough that he quotes the most divergent and therefore most striking passages. St Matthew's original Aramaic gospel Père Benoît attributes to the apostle St Matthew and to the date A.D. 40-50; but the Greek Matthew, which would not in his view be identical with it, he assigns to A.D. 62-70. The Synoptic Problem is a very complicated one, which it is impossible to discuss adequately here, but I venture to refer to my appendix on the subject in Vol. I (New Testament) of the Westminster Version, where stress is laid upon the effect of the memory as best explaining both the likenesses and the differences in the Synoptic gospels. I have developed my view further in the Cambridge Summer School book on *The New Testament* (Burns Oates, 1938). The Biblical Commission issued its answers on St Matthew's gospel under date of 19th June 1911. Père Benoît appears to favour the 'critics' too strongly in envisaging only documentary sources. However, this does not affect to any noticeable extent the value of his translation and commentary.

Père Spicq, O.P., is already well known for his editions of the Pastoral Epistles in the *Études Bibliques* series, and of the epistles to the Corinthians in the Pirot Bible, which he now follows up suitably with the epistle to the Hebrews, on the smaller scale of this series (80 pages : 160 francs), opting for Apollos as the author of the epistle, though

remarking that he was a disciple of St Paul, *profondément marqué par sa pensée* (p. 9), and associated with him to the end of the apostle's life—this with a reference to Tit. iii, 13. It seems a good choice, but there would be less difficulty in attributing the main authorship to St Paul himself with the Biblical Commission (24th June 1914) if it were remembered that he had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts xxii, 3), and that in this epistle accordingly he could let himself go before the Jews as a Jewish rabbi, treating his subject in a manner that would not have been so intelligible to gentiles. Even in writing to the latter, however, Paul shows himself the rabbi, as one may see (e.g.) in Père Bonsirven's *Exégèse rabbinique et Exégèse paulinienne* (Paris, Beauchesne, 1939). Not that the present exegesis of the epistle is unsatisfactory, regard being had for the scale of the whole series.

Finally, the Apocalypse is undertaken by Père Boismard, O.P., of the École Biblique (92 pages : 160 francs), who proposes a new hypothesis of his own, to the effect that it is a fusion of two apocalypses, originally independent, but due to the same author, because showing the same characteristics. The letters to the seven churches were also composed by the same author, though originally separate also, and only subsequently united to the main work. The view preferred is that the Apocalypse was written by a disciple of St John, just as (it is said, p. 20) the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by a disciple of St Paul; the date would be the earlier part of Domitian's reign. The theology of the work is carefully explained; one only sign is recognized for the end of the world: it will be preceded by a general assault from the powers of evil against the Church.

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'SUN, STAND THOU STILL'

(Joshua x, 12)

WHAT actually took place on this occasion? Certain moderns appear to have little doubt about the matter. 'It is hardly necessary to say that the adjuration to the sun to stand still is purely poetical and is to be compared with the words of Deborah's song "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera". The compiler of this book, however, took it as an actual prayer that was really granted, as is seen from the words "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven".' Samuel Holmes, Comm. Joshua, in *Peake's Commentary*, p. 253. In other words, nothing unusual took place. The sun and moon are simply poetically described as acting on behalf of Josue. Now we may grant, for the sake of argument, that such a mode of expression is allowable in this context (though there are many who would not agree that it is a Semitic form of speech). But what are we to say of verses 13b-14? Here is the root of the problem. Taken in their obvious sense, it certainly looks as if 'the compiler of this book' understood the poem as recording an objective 'stopping' of the sun. In this, say our moderns, he was mistaken. He took a poetical expression as recording literal fact. But is it quite as simple as that?

THE DAYLIGHT PROLONGED?

What, in the first place, has tradition to say on the subject? Apart from the Book of Ecclesiasticus which will be considered later, the earliest evidence we have seems to be that of Josephus (c. A.D. 93), who is quite sure that something objective occurred. 'It happened', he says, 'that the day was lengthened, that the night might not come on too soon and be an obstruction to the zeal of the Hebrews in pursuing their enemies' (*Antiq.* V, i, 17). Josephus then holds not merely that something objective occurred, but also that it was a lengthening of the daylight. Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, takes verse 14 quite literally, namely that the sun stopped in the midst of heaven, (i.e. at mid-day) and did not move again for the space of one whole day, i.e. until the next mid-day. This means that there was a day of thirty-six hours more or less, i.e. from dawn on the day of the battle, until sunset the following day. 'You (Jews) witnessed the sun stand still in the heavens by the order of that man whose name was Jesus (Josue) and not go down for 36 hours', *Dial. cum Tryph.* Cap. 132. In general, the Fathers understood the passage to mean a lengthening of the daylight.

The event is not *per se* a matter of faith or morals any more than, for example the question of whether all those outside the Ark perished in the Flood. Consequently, the above interpretation, even if universally accepted for centuries is not for *that* reason binding on us. 'In those

things' says Pope Leo XIII, 'which do not come under the obligation of faith, the saints were at liberty to hold divergent opinions, just as we ourselves are,' *Providentissimus Deus*. If we have good reasons for further investigation into the meaning of the passage, we are quite free to do so.

VARIOUS THEORIES ON PROLONGATION OF THE DAYLIGHT

How in fact have commentators understood this lengthening of the daylight? At first, as we have seen already, commentators understood it as having been brought about literally by the stopping of the sun. Then, when the Copernican theory gained general acceptance, interpreters explained the event as a stoppage of the earth's revolution. This of course would involve retaining everything in position on its surface, particularly the oceans, and further the keeping in place of the vast mass which is the core of the earth. No one who believes in God, will doubt that He who made the earth—indeed the whole visible creation—could both stop the revolution of the earth and prevent any consequent dislocation. Undoubtedly, God could do so, if He wished, but it may be doubted if He did wish. It would, for example, have been a very different procedure from what we know to be normally adopted by Him. Miracles are worked not only with an end in view but also in relation to circumstances. There appears to be a certain proportion between the miracle and the end to be obtained. What was the end in this case? The battle was certainly of great importance. It has even been described as one of the decisive battles of the world. Had Israel lost, they might have been thrown back across the Jordan, and the gaining of the Promised Land might have been long delayed. However, even granting this, it still seems inadequate reason for so stupendous a miracle. That is to say, it seems improbable that God would stop the revolution of the earth merely to provide extra daylight for the Israelites to finish their battle. Moreover, it is fair to suppose that had such a thing happened there would be some mention of it in the traditions of many nations—but of this there is not the least trace.

While rejecting the suggestion that the earth stopped, many Catholics to-day retain the interpretation that there was a lengthening of the daylight so that the Israelites might complete their victory. Some appear to content themselves with asserting this, without going into any details to explain it. The references to sun and moon, they say are poetical expressions and do not have to be taken literally. Others attempt to interpret the matter scientifically. This would not of course do away with the miracle, for it remains true that it took place at Josue's prayer and on an unprecedented scale. It is suggested, for example, that we have here a case of abnormal refraction of light at sunset. At the moment of setting, the sun is often seen to be higher than it really is, when certain

atmospheric conditions obtain. The sun may indeed seem to be raised vertically as much as the length of its diameter, when close to, or on, or just below the horizon. Others again have suggested a reflection of the sun's rays from the clouds as it sinks beneath the horizon. More recently it has been suggested that the extra daylight was caused by meteorites. A shower of these in Siberia in 1908 produced a strong light which was observed as far away as Sweden from about an hour after sunset until about two o'clock in the morning, cf. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, October 1946, p. 117. Within certain limits of course, it does not really matter very much which natural phenomenon, if any, God utilized and intensified. The important thing is the general agreement that there was some prolongation of the light.

THE BATTLE AND ITS GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Now a closer examination of the account raises a number of questions which are difficult if not impossible to answer on the theory that daylight was prolonged. At this point it will be well to give some account of the battle and of the events preceding and following it. The position before the battle was that five kings of Canaan with their armies were besieging the city of Gabaon, because its inhabitants had made a treaty with the Israelites. The latter were encamped at Gilgal by the Jordan, between Jericho and the river. The inhabitants of Gabaon sent an urgent request to Josue for help and he answered at once. 'So Josue, going up from Gilgal all the night, came upon them suddenly' (Joshua x, 9). The modern village of El Jib has long been regarded as the site of ancient Gabaon. 'It is found some six miles to the north-north-west of Jerusalem in a small plain, wherein it occupies an imposing position upon an isolated knoll . . . To the west its level lands reach out a mile or more and then break away into a stony valley, the Wady Selman, which leads down below Beth Horon into the valley of Aijalon, near Yalo' (Garstang, *Joshua-Judges*, p. 162). What of the country between Gabaon and the Jordan? We must here recall that while Gabaon is nearly 2,500 feet above sea level, situated as it is on the backbone of Palestine, Gilgal by the Jordan is over 1,000 feet below sea level. The distance between the two places is nearly twenty miles—and the country is mountainous, barren and exceedingly rough. A night march through country of this sort involving a climb of over 3,000 feet would be no light matter. What was the time of year? There are few indications to go by. After crossing the Jordan the Israelites had celebrated the Pasch (Joshua v, 10) i.e. the 14-21st Nisan (Abib), which coincides roughly with our March-April. Since then, the Israelites had captured Jericho and Hai and had renewed the Covenant on mounts Hebal and Gerizim. Following that had come the deputation from the city of Gabaon and the treaty with them. The

siege of Gabaon must have started soon afterwards. To allow time for all these events to take place we can hardly put the siege much earlier than the month of June. If this is correct then we have one good reason for a night march—namely to avoid the heat of the day.

When did the attack take place? All we have to go on here is the statement that 'Josue came upon them suddenly for he went up from Gilgal all the night' (Joshua x, 9). This suggests a surprise attack at daybreak. No doubt the men would need time for a rest after their exhausting march, in order to regain their strength before battle, but it is difficult to see what verse 9 means if we interpose a long interval between march and battle. Moreover, the element of surprise would seem to require an attack at dawn. Indeed the whole narrative suggests this. Similar attacks have been made at other times in history without any appreciable interval for rest before battle. The surprise factor makes up for the fatigue of the troops, indeed often it more than makes up for it, and may even supply for inferiority in numbers. Further, the text itself suggests dawn. As Dr Rowley has noted,¹ if the sun were over Gabaon to the east, and the moon in the valley of Aijalon to the west (verse 12) from the standpoint of the speaker placed between the two, the time would be morning (though clearly we should not attach too exact a meaning to a fragment of an epic poem.)

The actual battle would hardly last more than a few hours, and perhaps much less. The slaughter was heavy and the enemy took to flight. Israel 'chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth Horon' (RV). This place lay to the north-west of Gabaon at a distance of about eight miles. It was situated on a low isolated hill and overlooked the Wady Selman to the south. The road to it from Gabaon ran across the rough plain for some miles, then along a projecting spur to a crest somewhat higher than the plain and descended sharply to Beth Horon, seven hundred feet below and about two miles from the crest just mentioned. In later times this was the main road from Jerusalem to Joppa. Another road led from Gabaon in a more westerly direction across the plain and straight down the Wady Selman, passing below Beth Horon.

It was while the enemy were in flight, having already sustained heavy losses, that a fresh disaster befell them. A hailstorm of unprecedented severity now burst upon them and we read with astonishment that more were slain by the hail-stones than by the swords of the Israelites (verse 11). The maximum recorded weight of a hailstone is about two pounds or one kilogramme and no one will dispute the lethal quality of an object of this weight falling from such a height. Severe hailstorms are very common, for example in the Transvaal, South Africa, where cattle are often killed by stones as large as cricket balls. In Europe

¹ *The Re-discovery of the Old Testament*, p. 68.

they are a great scourge in vine-growing countries, where stones the size of golf balls may occur. Benvenuto Cellini describes a hailstorm in which a great many shepherds were killed, *Life* (Bk IV, chap. i). But we may be pardoned for not accepting his unsupported statement. There is, however, some evidence that a man has occasionally been killed by hail. This brief investigation only shows up all the more clearly the remarkable character of the storm that burst over Israel's enemies, and we need not hesitate to regard it as miraculous.¹

The battle then seems to have taken place in the morning, a great slaughter was made of the enemy who took to flight. As they fled they suffered even heavier casualties from the hailstorm which burst upon them. Altogether things had gone very nicely for Israel and the decision seemed already reached.

WHAT DID JOSUE ASK FOR?

Then comes the extraordinary passage (Joshua x, 12ff) which states apparently that the sun stood still at Josue's request so that he could complete his victory over the Canaanites. We may be pardoned for asking why he should want *this* particular miracle worked for him, since (a) the victory was already won and the hail was doing greater execution among the enemy than his own men had been able to achieve; (b) it was apparently not later than mid-day,² so that there were many hours of daylight left in which to complete the discomfiture of the enemy. (c) taking verse 13b quite literally we must assume that there was continuous daylight for at least 36 hours, i.e. from dawn on the day of battle until sunset of the following day, cf. Justin Martyr, loc. cit. If the daylight was extended, it was presumably to allow Israel to pursue and kill the enemy. Are we therefore to suppose that they made a forced march from Galgal to Gabaon through difficult country, attacked at dawn, routed the enemy all during that day, and pursued them all that night and the following day? On this calculation, Josue's men would have been in continuous march or battle for two nights and two days or very nearly so.

At this point the supporters of the 'daylight theory' will interrupt: 'You are taking the text far too literally', they will say, 'Not only the poetic passage of 12-13a is to be understood in a wide sense, but also verse 13b. We need not suppose that the sun appeared to be still, literally, in the midst of heaven from mid-day to mid-day. It is surely only necessary to take these words as a description in rather colourful language

¹ For another occasion on which the Lord provided a storm to assist Israel against their enemies, see I Kings vii, 10.

² *bah'si*, an exact term (verse 13b). In reckoning the time of day we rely on this and data already given and not on any calculation based on the relative position of sun and moon as mentioned in verse 12.

of a miraculous prolongation of daylight—for how long, we cannot say, nor do we really need to enquire.'

And here perhaps we are approaching the heart of the matter. The 'daylight theory' supporters say that although it is hard to explain the point of the miracle in its context, nevertheless the plain meaning of the text demands the 'daylight' interpretation and we ought to keep to it. But when asked to explain further, it would seem that they are not so ready to accept its 'plain meaning'.¹

THE DARKNESS THEORY

Another solution appears to be at least as close to the text as the ones already mentioned and to make better sense of the whole narrative.²

When the hailstorm was at its height it was yet but mid-day (13b). Why should Josue be anxious about daylight? Surely if he prayed for anything at that moment it was for a continuation of the storm?

At this point it is necessary to give a full translation of the Hebrew text, and for convenience we print that of the Revised Version:

'Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon.
And the sun stood still and the moon stayed,
Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.'

Is not this written in the Book of Jashar? And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel (Joshua x, 12-14).

The word translated 'stand still' is *damam* which means primarily 'be silent'.³ Then, as words denoting silence came to be applied to those who abstained, not only from speech but also from action, *damam* acquired the meaning 'to be still or quiet, to rest' (cf. Lam. ii, 18; Job xxx, 27). As applied to the sun, the verb could refer either to its moving or to its shining.⁴ Is it 'Stand thou still' or 'Cease' (from shining)?

¹ Cf. also the clear divergence between the text of verse 13b taken literally and the views listed on p. 306.

² The proposed view follows, in substance, that of van Hoonacker, *Expositor*, 1916, II, art. 'And the sun stood still', but differs from it in one or two important details.

³ Cf. Psalms iv, 5; xxx, 13; Exodus xv, 16. The word is onomatopaeic, as Gesenius points out, *Thesaurus Linguae Hebraeae et Chaldaeae*, s.v.; it conveys the idea of closed lips: cf. Greek *muo*.

⁴ Indeed we may find in literature the actual unequivocal word 'be silent' used of sun and moon, e.g. Cato the Censor uses the words *luna silenti* to describe the new moon when her light is not seen, *De Re Rustica*, cap. xxix. Dante at the beginning of the *Inferno* has 'Mi ripingeva la dov' il sol tace', *Canto I*, line 60.

The word 'amad is also used in verse 13 (RV 'stayed'). It could indicate refraining from local movement or from some other action.¹ Taking the primary meaning of each word we should get the following: 'The sun was silent and the moon stayed'. On this Dr Rowley comments: 'The sun is not silent when it blazes forth from the heavens, but when it does not shine. Moreover it is common for the sun to represent the day and the moon the night, and in the poetic statement that the moon remained it is natural to see a reference to the prolongation of the night,' *The Re-Discovery of the Old Testament*, p. 68. If the description ended there we might feel satisfied with this translation. But in verse 13b we have the interpretation *in prose*, presumably by the author of Josue, of the preceding poetic passage. And he certainly appears to describe the event as a stopping of the sun's *movement*: 'And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven and hastened not to go down about a whole day'. The verb here rendered 'to go down' is, in Hebrew, *bō*, to go in, enter, used in other passages of the setting of the sun. We have already seen that the supporters of the 'daylight theory' do not usually make any serious attempt to suggest that the sun was seen literally to stop still in the midst of heaven, i.e. at mid-day, and to stay there motionless till mid-day on the following day. Indeed it is hard to see that they give any real explanation of this passage at all. We have suggested that what Josue would surely have wanted to see continue was the hailstorm. Now if the sun disappeared behind the clouds at about mid-day when the storm broke and the clouds did not clear till the middle of the following day, it would look as if it had never moved from that position for the space of twenty-four hours and, to all appearances, it then started to move again towards its setting after being in the sky since the previous morning. This interpretation takes the whole verse literally as a description according to appearances, and it is fair to ask whether it does not do justice to the text and context better than the 'daylight theories'.²

¹ The word usually means 'to stand' or 'to take up one's stand'. It is also used in the sense of 'to remain, survive', cf. Exodus xxi, 21; or 'persevere' (cf. IV Kings xxiii, 31; Ecclesiastes viii, 3; Isaiah xlvii, 12). The word may also mean 'to stay still' as opposed to going away, or 'to refrain from an action', cf. I Kings xx, 38; II Kings xiii, 18 ('He smote thrice and stayed') Lev. xiii, 5; IV Kings iv, 6.

² In an article published recently (*De Miraculo Solari Josue*, in *Verbum Domini* 1950, p. 227), Père de Fraine, S.J. argues convincingly that the passage in verses 13c to 14 constitutes two Hebrew verses. If this is correct, it will naturally have a bearing on the interpretation of the passage. He takes the verb 'amad to mean the obscuring of the sun, as in Hab. iii, 11, and the verb *bō* to refer to the sun entering on its course across the heavens. The obscuring took place when the sun was 'half-way to its zenith (*bah^asi hasshamayim*)' and the phrase *keyom tamim* is taken to mean 'as on a (normal) day', hence 'hastened not to enter the heavens as (it would have done) on a normal day'. The storm involving the obscuring of the sun, would then have lasted but a few hours only, and there would be no question of it lasting till the following day. The explanation is attractive, though de Fraine would be the first to admit its tentative nature.

We have then a fragment of a epic poem describing the victory in vivid language and composed within a few years of the battle. At some unknown date it was inserted in the *Book of Yashar* (the Just), evidently a collection of such poems enshrining the traditions of Israel.¹

It should be noted that the English version *so long a day* (Vulgate: *tam longa dies*) adds something (the idea of length) to the original Hebrew. But the special significance of the day was not its length, but the fact that on it 'the Lord fought for Israel' (verse 14). Now this phrase can hardly refer to extra light to fight by; on the other hand it does very exactly describe the hailstorm, in which the Lord himself, as it were, killed more by the hailstones than did the Israelites by their swords (verse 11). On this interpretation therefore every word has been taken in its natural sense and full account has been taken of the context. It is not claimed that all difficulty has been removed but it may be held that the above explanation is at least more convincing than the 'daylight theories'.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DARKNESS THEORY ANSWERED

(a) It will be objected that the author of Josue clearly describes two miracles and we are trying to make them into one. Does the text bear out this contention? It is true that after the description of the storm (verse 11) we have the description of the sun. But the author does not necessarily intend to suggest that the event in verses 12-13 did actually follow that of verse 11 in point of time. When he says 'Then spake Joshua' he does not necessarily mean 'next'. He may mean only 'on that occasion' (i.e. of the battle and the storm) Josue prayed to the Lord, without specifying the exact moment, and it may indeed have taken place before or during the initial stages of the storm. The rather disjointed nature of the narrative is due to the fact that at this point he begins the quotation from the *Book of Yashar*. Verses 12b-13a are a poetic account, on our view, of the miracle just described in verse 11.

We may go further and object against the 'daylight' theory—it is likely that the *first* mention of a new and stupendous miracle would be made by means of a quotation and a poetic quotation at that? In Numbers xxi there are no less than three examples of such quotations from epic poems. In each case the author of the book gives first a prose account of the event and then the poetical quotation describing the same thing, Numbers xxi, 11-15; 16-18; 24-30.² Thus on our proposed interpretation, Joshua x falls into line with other texts where similar quotations are made. First there is the prose narrative of the hailstorm (verses 10-11) and then there is the poetic quotation describing the same event (12-13).

¹ Poems were added to it from time to time, for we find that David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan was also in it.

² Cf. also I Kings i, 20-22, 10; II Kings i and iii, 30-4.

(b) It will further be objected that the reference to Joshua x in the Book of Ecclesiasticus xlvi, 5-7, does not bear out our interpretation. The miracles of the sun and hail are clearly distinguished, it is said, only the order is different—first the stoppage of the sun and then the hail. Let us now see if this is the case. The Hebrew text is fragmentary but its general sense is clear enough. We give also the Greek (lxx) text which is more complete.

HT.—4. Was it not by his hand that the sun stood for one day . . .

5. Because he called upon the Most High God as (his enemies) pressed on him (all around). And God the Most High, heard him with stones of . . .

LXX.—5. For was not the sun impeded by his hand and one day become like two ?

6. For he called upon God the Most High, as his enemies pressed on him from all sides, and the great Lord answered him by stones of hail of mighty power.

Let us note first that this account too is poetry.

The actual description of the sun coincides with that in Joshua x and says no more than that passage. It is the rest of the description in Ecclesiasticus which is of interest. After referring to the 'stopping' of the sun, the author goes on to say that it was *because* Josue prayed to God, i.e. the 'stopping' of the sun was the answer to his prayer. And surely we might expect the sentence to stop there if the hailstorm were a separate event. But instead the author continues (without a pause): 'And God answered him with stones of hail of great power'. In other words the author seems to *identify* in some way the 'stopping' of the sun with the hailstorm, as the answer to Josue's prayer. This is surely a remarkable way of describing it if indeed two quite distinct events are meant. Is not van Hoonacker fully justified in saying 'The statement is perfectly clear: the 'stopping' of the sun was a phenomenon implied in the hailstorm' ?¹

R. C. FULLER.

¹ Art. cit. *Expositor*, 1916, II, p. 338.

THE PERIODICALS

VERBUM DOMINI, 1950—R. North, *Thronus Satanae pergamenus*' 65–76. Identifies the 'throne of Satan' (Apoc. ii, 12) with Pergamum itself, set on its hill as on a throne; the morals of the city justify the epithet 'of Satan'. Reference to Pergamum's altar of Jove, to its devotion to Aesculapius, to its emperor-worship, is implicit only. H. Kruse, *De inferioritate morali Veteris Testamenti*, 77–88. Remarkable article refusing the common opinion of God's 'indirect dispensation from the natural law' with regard to certain practices (e.g. pogrom) of the Old Testament. The word 'permission' does not solve the difficulty nor justify the terms of the Old Testament which often suggest positive 'approbation' on God's part. The problem is resolved by affirming that God willed (at least indirectly) such acts done in ignorance of the natural law ('material sin') as He wills physical disasters, for His own purpose. F. Zeman, *Indoles 'daemonum' in scriptis prophetarum et aestimatio cultus 'daemonibus' praestiti*, 89–97. Conclusion of a series (cf. also V.Dni. 1949) dealing with biblical 'demons' in the light of the demonology of the ancient East. They are to be identified not with the demons of Mesopotamia but with the pagan gods. The 'lilith' is probably either beast or bird; the meaning of the Ugaritic 'llyt' remains uncertain. J. Leal, *Exegesis catholica de Agno Dei in ultimis viginti et quinque annis*, 98–109. See below 'Lamb of God' (p. 315). A. Sustar, *De caritate apud Sanctum Ioannem*, 110–19; 129–40; 193–213; 257–70; 321–40. A substantial biblico-theological study of two aspects of Charity in the Gospel and epistles of John: charity to God and to neighbour. Special reference to Nygren's 'Eros und Agape'. A. Roosen, *Testimonium Spiritus* (Romans viii, 16), 214–26. The 'testimony of the Spirit' is not an extraordinary mystical phenomenon, the reply of God to our cry of 'Abba, Father', but is to be identified with the cry itself. This 'testimony' is conceded to all fervent Christians and not only to those with charismatic gifts. J. De Fraine, *De miraculo solari Josue*, 227–36. The author accepts the 'proper literal' sense of the famous 'sun' text of Joshua x, 12–15 while making allowance for poetical expression and suggesting the following translation: The sun was obscured (not 'stood still') while half-way to its zenith and hasted not to reach the zenith as on a (normal) day. H. Faccio, *De Thesauro Abscondito* (Matt. xiii, 44), 237–42. Spiritual commentary upon the inestimable value of the Kingdom—emphasis upon its final stage to the detriment of the exegesis of some texts (e.g. Matt. xix, 16 30). M. Zerwick, *Vivere ex Verbo Dei: Perseveranter Orare* (Luke xi, 5–13), 243–47. Useful article on prayer with the 'Importunate Friend' parable as starting-point. M.Z., *Ex undecima Hebdomada Biblica*, 341–61. Report on the Biblical Week held

in Rome, 25-30th September 1950, during which : C. Stano treated of the synthetic mode of Gospel exegesis, C. Lo Giudice of the dramatic presentation of the struggle of the Light against darkness in the fourth Gospel, de Ambroggi of the origin of the Pastoral Epistles defending their Pauline authorship. A. Bea analysed and commented upon the three recent (1950) Papal documents concerned with Scriptural matters (*Humani Generis*, Assumption Definition, Instruction on the teaching of Scripture, cf. AAS 42 (1950) 495-505); underlined the Holy Father's demand for a prudent approach to the Evolution question; expressed his own opinion that Scripture though it does not clearly exclude 'mitigated evolution' yet in its natural interpretation suggests (*sensu suo obvio... suadet*) that the human body was produced by the immediate intervention of God without physiological connection with the brute kingdom. Polygenism: not explicitly condemned by the *Humani Generis* but forbidden to be held by the faithful. Doctrine of the Assumption: Genesis iii formally implies our Lady's complete victory over death (*formaliter implicite contentam*); this 'literal sense' is determined by dogmatic tradition. E. Dal Grande treated of the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of our Lord. A. Vaccari spoke of historical elements in the parables, drawing a parallel between Archelaus and the 'nobleman' of Luke xix, 12. A. Bea delivered two illustrated lectures on the Dead Sea scrolls, bringing their story up to date; they were deposited apparently before the end of the first century B.C. as the containing pottery and their ink suggest; the cave was probably a 'geniza', it was visited and plundered in the second and eighth centuries and again in the winter of 1948. J. T. Milik, *Duo cantici ex volumine hymnorum nuper invento ad Mare Mortuum*, 362-71. Translation, with cross-reference to other hymns and apocrypha of the Dead Sea collection, of two canticles published in Sukenik's Meghilloth Genuzoth (Jerusalem, 1950, Tabulae IX and X). Discussion of their doctrine deferred to future articles. L. Leloir, *Hodie mecum eris in Paradiso* (Luke xxiii, 43), 372-80. The spiritual lessons to be drawn from the 'Good Thief' incident.

The Lamb of God. This title, used by the Baptist according to the fourth Gospel, has recently been attracting attention; (F.-M. Braun, O.P., *Revue Thomiste*, 1948, 347-93; V. Laridon, *Collationes Brugenses*, 1950, 448-53; J. Leal, S.J., *Verbum Domini*, 1950, 98-109). The three articles mentioned agree in rejecting the interpretation proposed by Lagrange in 1925, viz. that the title on the Baptist's lips implies no more than excelling innocence; all insist that the Baptist speaks of an expiatory sacrificial victim and see a reference to Isaias, chapter liii. The objection removed by Lagrange's view now recurs: the Baptist's rapid change from the Messiah-Judge concept (the Synoptics, recording the Baptist's words before our Lord's baptism) to that of the Messiah-Victim (the fourth Gospel, in this hypothesis, recording words subsequent to the

baptism). The solution offered is that of revelation conceded to the Baptist at the time of our Lord's baptism: 'the Baptist was the first to achieve this synthesis of these two characteristics of the Messiah' (Braun l. c.). It is certainly not improbable that the revelation of our Lord's Messiahship undoubtedly made to the Baptist should have reached these heights but it is unfortunate that the authors quoted do not deal with the difficulty of the Baptist's subsequent inquiry (Matt. xi, 2 ff; Luke vii, 18ff). It is to be assumed that they accept the explanation, which seems to us less natural, that it was not the Baptist but only his disciples who were disturbed at our Lord's gentle procedure. It appears important, too, to distinguish clearly between the meaning put into the phrase by the Baptist and the applications of it made by the Evangelist. It would be well to bear this in mind when using the many Patristic references in the *Verbum Domini* article; they are not all to the point.

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BOOK REVIEWS

From Joseph to Joshua. Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archæology by H. H. Rowley, F.B.A. The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1948. (Oxford University Press, London, 1950) Pp. xii + 200. 12s. 6d.

Finis coronat opus! In the present volume the *finis* (in the sense of the tail-piece) is the long, detailed bibliography of twenty-four pages, giving the titles of several hundred books and articles that Professor Rowley has consulted in the making of the present imposing synthesis. He tells us modestly in his preface that he has 'read only a small part of the literature devoted to my subject, or to some of its details'; hence he offers merely a book-list, not a complete bibliography. A mathematician may like to calculate, if he can, how many months would be needed by the average person to master the contents of the book-list, and so to exercise some sort of control on Professor Rowley's lucid and sincere achievement.

It is perhaps curious that the most important page in the book is one that, like the page facing it, bears no number, though in the table of contents it is numbered 164. The subject being stated in the title as the period in Israelite history extending from Joseph to Joshua, it might puzzle more than one reader to discover what exactly are the main positions that have been proved according to the author's scholarly judgement, and in the present state of archæological and linguistic research. It is true that the third of the three lectures is headed 'synthesis', but this lecture is all but the longest of the three, and is not confined to main

headings and fundamental conclusions. (Incidentally, the book would have been easier reading if every paragraph had been furnished with a marginal summary, and if the headlines of the pages had given the contents of each pair, at a glance.) So the 'Summary of Dates' on p. 164 is especially useful. From it one may read in one line what occupies many pages of discussion in the text—that the date of Abraham's migration from Harran is now commonly, if provisionally, fixed at about 1650 B.C. This is some four hundred years later than the date frequently assigned to Abraham in the days when he was considered (for reasons connected with the once popular equation of the Amraphel of Genesis xiv with the great Babylonian king and lawgiver) to be a contemporary of Hammurabi, whose dates were given by the *Cambridge Ancient History* (Vol. I, second edition 1924) as 2123–2081 B.C. Since 1924, as Professor Rowley remarks, Hammurabi has been made to 'career about among the centuries in a most disturbing fashion'. Further, there is a progressive shrinkage in the number of scholars who identify Hammurabi with Amraphel, and Abraham himself, once 'a stranger and sojourner' among the Hittites of Hebron, must by now be inured to camping for a remarkably short time at any particular date in a chronological table!

It is not astonishing, then, that the dates of Abraham's descendants have been correspondingly lowered by several centuries. Thus a comparatively late date (1370 B.C.) is accepted by Rowley as that of Joseph's descent into Egypt, a date falling within the reign of Ikhnaton, the 'heretic' Pharaoh (1375–60 B.C.). Ten years later, in 1360 B.C., the Hebrews move down into Egypt, and about 1300 B.C., the oppression of the Israelites by Ramses II (1300–1233 B.C.) begins. Another period of ten years, and Moses, the mighty deliverer of Israel from Egyptian tyranny, is born. In his fortieth year (1250 B.C.) takes place the Exodus from Egypt under Moses; this is followed by the covenant between Yahweh and the Exodus tribes, and the formulation of the so-called Ethical Decalogue. The forty years' wanderings are, in this hypothesis set out by Rowley, reduced to two; then Josue leads the tribes who have come 'up from slavery' in Egypt, across the Jordan and into central Palestine, where they settle.

Students of Biblical history will realize that this scheme, a very brief summary of two hundred pages of closely-knit argument, is not seldom at variance with the more traditional pictures of Israel's Exodus and settlement in Canaan. While reserving judgement on many points, one may congratulate Professor Rowley on his profound knowledge of the literature, and on his ability to weave a convincing narrative out of many thousands of details, which must often appear, at first sight, to be wholly unrelated. Those who were privileged to hear all three lectures as they were delivered in an abbreviated form in December 1948, will be delighted to have the full text before them, with its vast store of

elucidatory footnotes, which should enable them and many others to take up for themselves the fascinating study of the historical period *From Joseph to Joshua*.

JOHN M. T. BARTON.

La Sainte Bible : Tome V : Les Psaumes, traduits et commentés par E. Pannier : nouvelle édition par H. Renard, Doyen de la Faculté de Théologie de Lille (Paris : Letouzey et Ané, 1950).

The series of commentaries begun under the general editorship of Professor Louis Pirot, of the Catholic University of Lille, is being continued under Professor Albert Clamer, of the seminary of Nancy. It is a sign of the continued life in the series that this new edition of the psalms has been issued. It seems a pity that a full statement of the volumes already published at the time of publication has not been included; probably many would be grateful for it. One can understand the publishers not committing themselves to a price; but on the present volume 1020 francs is pencilled on the paper cover, and 865 francs for subscribers. The commentary is a very full one, running to 775 pages ($8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ inches) of rather small print. At the desire of Père Vosté, O.P., the late learned and regretted secretary of the Biblical Commission, the Vulgate text has been printed in full along with that of the new psalter published by the Biblical Institute. The French version is made from the original Hebrew, but is put into italics where it differs from the Vulgate; but it does not necessarily follow the new psalter of the Biblical Institute in such cases.

Psalm xxx (Vg. xxix). 4 may be quoted as a more or less instructive verse :

Tu as retiré mon âme du schéol, ô Yahweh,
tu m'as rappelé à la vie, tu ne m'as pas laissé
descendre au tombeau.

The Vulgate has *ab inferno* and *lacum*, the Bib. Inst. *ab inferis* and *foveam* : Père Condamin in his *Poèmes de la Bible* (Beauchesne, 1933) preferred *Cheol* and *Iahvé*. Mgr Knox renders 'the place of shadows' : I pitched myself on 'nether-world' : the chief thing is to avoid 'hell'. But it seems a pity that a French word cannot be found. The second line is entirely in italics, as departing considerably from the Vulgate, from which the Bib. Inst. text only departs as above. The literal translation would be :

Jehovah, thou hast brought up my soul from the nether-world :
Thou hast restored me to life from among those
who go down to the pit.

For 'Thou hast restored me to life', possibly we should render, 'Thou hast kept me alive' : and for 'from among those who go down', possibly 'from my going down', omitting a consonant with almost as strong

support as has the text. 'My going down' represents the Hebrew infinitive with a pronominal possessive suffix. Hebrew, so defective and unpliant a language in many respects, may be said to score with its free syntactical use of the infinitive.

Perhaps the above may give some idea of the difficulties of translating the psalms, which are not imaginary; but in general the work has been well and carefully done. The notes are very full, perhaps even a little diffuse, but this seems to be a fault on the right side, so long as the cost of production can bear it, as it evidently can in this case; and the student is not likely to feel the lack of any help that he desires. Perhaps greater stress might have been laid on the metre. This is a somewhat delicate question, for the more or less even pronunciation of all syllables in French makes it rather difficult for them to appreciate fully the swing of the poetry in languages which have a strong stress, such as Hebrew or English. So true is this, in fact, that in practice they have held absolutely fast to rhyme in their poetry, whereas neither Hebrew nor English need it, though even the former at times appears to intend it, a possibility hardly more than mentioned on p. 26. But the essence of Hebrew poetry lies in the balance of sense and stress, though this admits of much freedom in actual practice. For an example one may go to the Our Father, originally no doubt an Aramaic poem:

Thy kingdom come: thy will be done
As in heaven, so on earth.

In the Introduction the question of text is treated with some fullness (pp. 39-51); but one would have liked an even greater emphasis on the sharp difference between the two main periods in the history of the text, the first of great carelessness, the second of minute exactness. We may not unjustly say that the stable was locked after the horse had escaped. The original Hebrew text was purely consonantal; in the sixth century A.D. and onwards the Jewish 'Massoretes' (from *Massora*, probably meaning 'tradition') stereotyped an official text with the addition of vowel-points and other signs, and practically only this official Hebrew text has come down to us. Even this goes straight on without distinguishing the poetical lines; but before that even alphabetical psalms (with each verse or small division beginning with the next letter of the alphabet) had been divided, and had lost some of their key letters, by a careless change of text. Single psalms had been separated into two, and distinct psalms had been joined into one, and other obvious mistakes had been made (cf. pp. 41-3). No part of the Bible stands in greater need of textual emendation, the necessity for which, here as in several other Catholic editions, is fully recognized.

C. LATTEY, S.J.